

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (CANCELED)

2. (CANCELED)

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data, and also storing special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

data switching means for selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data and the splicing data from said data storage means for transmission to a buffer of a data receiving terminal, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to the buffer such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data; and

transmission means for transmitting the selective output from said data switching means to the data receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

4. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the splicing data comprises repeat data which is equivalent to data positioned immediately before the splicing data.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data and splicing data;

decoding means for reading the playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback request, and for decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding means for encoding the special playback signal generated by said decoding means so as to generate special playback data, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

data switching means for selectively outputting the special playback data obtained by said encoding means and the splicing data read from said data storage means, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to a buffer of a receiving terminal such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data; and

transmission means for transmitting the selective output to the data receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

6. (ORIGINAL) A data distribution apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the splicing data comprises repeat data which is equivalent to data positioned immediately before the splicing data.

7. (CANCELED)

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A data distribution method for reading special playback data from a data storage unit to a receiving terminal, said data storage unit storing playback data, and also storing the special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, said data distribution method comprising the steps of:

receiving a special playback request from an external source;

reading the special playback data from said data storage unit in response to the special playback request to provide an output data for the special mode, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

reading the splicing data from said data storage unit and inserting the splicing data into the output data for the special mode, wherein the splicing data is inserted such that a locus of used bits of a buffer of the receiving terminal is continuous when switching between the special mode and a normal mode, and wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;; and

transmitting the output data to the receiving terminal via a transmission medium.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A data distribution method for distributing special playback data by using playback data and splicing data stored in a data storage unit to a receiving terminal, said data distribution method comprising the steps of:
- receiving a special playback request from an external source;
 - reading the playback data from said data storage unit in response to the special playback request;
 - decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;
 - encoding the generated special playback signal so as to generate special playback data, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;
 - and
 - reading the splicing data from said data storage unit and inserting the splicing data into an output data that includes the special playback data, wherein the splicing data is inserted into the output data such that a locus of used bits of a buffer of the receiving terminal is continuous when switching between the special playback data and a normal playback data, wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data, and transmitting the output data to the receiving terminal via a transmission medium.
10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A data distribution system for distributing data which includes special playback data from a data distribution apparatus to a terminal device,
- said data distribution apparatus comprising:
 - receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;
 - data storage means for storing playback data, and also storing special playback data and splicing data, both of which are used for playing back the playback data in a special mode, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;
 - data switching means for selectively outputting the playback data, the special playback data and the splicing data from said data storage means for transmission to a buffer of the terminal device, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output for transmission to the buffer such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, wherein the insertion of the splicing data

accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data; and

transmission means for transmitting the selective output from said data switching means to said terminal device via a transmission medium, and

said terminal device comprising:

receiving means for receiving the data transmitted from said data distribution apparatus; and

decoding means for decoding the data received by said receiving means.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A data distribution system for distributing data which includes special playback data from a data distribution apparatus to a terminal device,

said data distribution apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a special playback request from an external source;

data storage means for storing playback data and splicing data;

decoding means for reading the playback data from said data storage means in response to the special playback request, and for decoding the read playback data so as to generate a special playback signal;

encoding means for encoding the special playback signal generated by said

decoding means so as to generate special playback data, wherein intra-frame encoding is used for a substantial portion of the special playback data;

data switching means for selectively outputting the special playback data obtained by said encoding means and the splicing data read from said data storage means, wherein the splicing data is inserted as the selective output such that a locus of used bits of a buffer of the terminal device is continuous when switching between the playback data and the special playback data, wherein the insertion of the splicing data accounts for intra-frame encoding being used for a substantial portion of the special playback data; and

transmission means for transmitting the special playback data or the splicing data from said data switching means to said terminal device via a transmission medium, and

said terminal device comprising:

receiving means for receiving the data transmitted from said data distribution apparatus; and

decoding means for decoding the data received by said receiving means.

12. (CANCELLED).

13. (CANCELLED).

14. (CANCELLED).

15. (CANCELLED).

16. (CANCELLED).

17. (CANCELLED).

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that the locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that the locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 8, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

21. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 9, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 10, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

23. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 11, wherein insertion of the splicing data is according to a splicing technique used in editing such that a locus of used bits of the buffer is continuous.

24. (NEW) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the entirety of the special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

25. (NEW) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the entirety of the special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

26. (NEW) The method of claim 8, wherein the entirety of the special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

27. (NEW) The method of claim 9, wherein the entirety of the special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

28. (NEW) The system of claim 10, wherein the entirety of the special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.

29. (NEW) The system of claim 11, wherein the entirety of the special playback data is intra-frame encoded, and the playback data is substantially inter-frame predictive encoded.